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ABSTRACT

Designed as a guide to the inservice training of instructional aides in the Vocational Strategies for Special Needs Students Program in Boston, this manual is intended to aid in the general training of paraprofessionals. The inservice training program outlined is aimed at developing the relationship building skills of the instructional aide at the shop training station, in the resource room, and in the counseling situation. Part A of the manual contains a description of the prospective paraprofessional, the process for hiring, and the responsibilities of vocational instructional aides; a job application form; a discussion of staff structure including the roles of vocational (shop) instructor, resource room teacher, teacher counselor, and training coordinator; and notes on where the use of paraprofessionals has been effective. Part B outlines the seven units of the training program which focus on specific vocational skills, clinical psychology, handicaps, study of work, and utilizing resources. Suggestions for the trainer include teaching procedures and techniques for the workshop sessions. Suggested format is seven units of workshops, each consisting of five sessions conducted by community experts on topics necessary to effective performance of vocational instructional aides and five complementary sessions conducted by the training coordinator for integrating instructional aides into the total support team and for involving them in verbal and written communication skills. (TA)

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TRAINING MANUAL: PARAPROFESSIONALS

VOCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

BOSTON STATE COLLEGE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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H-8376 Part B/Handicapped

PART A

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PREFACE

As the Vocational Strategies for Special Needs Students project progressed through its second year, one of the significant factors for effective operation at the local school level became obvious: the role and function of the paraprofessional. These aides, more than other staff, related continually to the student population and served as a caring link for them between shop curriculum, shop teacher, resource room, school administration and regular students.

An understanding of the importance of the role of paraprofessionals, or "new professionals"(1), led to the development of training workshops during the first two years of the project. Early seminars (1974-75) were founded on the need to familiarize the paraprofessionals with emerging individualized shop curricula. Later sessions (1975-76) emphasized the unique psychological, social and emotional needs of the student population which had to be addressed while preparing them for the work place.

The material which follows here in an outgrowth of our recent experience and was developed by two members of the project. One developer was Mary Sochockyj, assistant to the project, who acted as liaison between the project and the paraprofessionals during the school year. She worked with Mary Ellen Preusser, our technical consultant on the paraprofessional workshops in our second year, who has been long active in the Massachusetts Association for Children

(1) Alan Gartner and Frank Riessman, "The Paraprofessional Movement in Perspective," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, December 1974.

with Learning Disabilities (MACLD).

The use of paraprofessionals described here should in no way be perceived as limited to the specific program at hand. The role of the paraprofessional, detailed here, is widely adaptable. Yet there are certain fundamental features in using paraprofessionals effectively that must be common. First, the school system or program must be willing to explore "differentiated staffing." The special education teacher in the resource room or the vocational teacher in the shop area must assign certain responsibilities to the paraprofessional. This restructuring of the classroom redefines the roles of the entire staff. While the teacher has the added responsibility of supervising the aides, the teacher gains freedom to manage the class as a whole. While the teacher continues to have direct responsibility for student learning, the arrangement allows the teacher to keep the curriculum flowing at a steady pace while specific student problems are addressed by the paraprofessional.

Second, training sessions for the paraprofessional must include basic knowledge of skills needed on the job.

Third, a school system must be willing to support training programs for paraprofessionals which emphasize and develop sensitivity to psychological and emotional problems which are in themselves social handicaps that can severely compromise job effectiveness.

Doreen V. Blanc
Project Director

The purpose of this manual is to provide a guide to the in-service training of Instructional Aides in the Vocational Strategies for Special Needs Students Program.

However, based on this program's experience over the past two years, it is expected that this manual may aid in the general training of paraprofessionals, particularly those involved with special needs students in vocational programs.

The rationale for the use of the paraprofessional as an Instructional Aide stemmed from the target population itself. The program at Boston Trade High School involved special needs students older than their academic achievement level, who needed support in job skills and job related social skills, as well as individual instruction in vocationally related academic work.

In planning and implementing a program where special needs students are mainstreamed into the standard shop training environment, the presence of a paraprofessional as an Instructional Aide has been crucial. Supervised by the resource room, or vocational teacher, the Instructional Aide provides the necessary link between teacher and student, between student and the world of work.

INTRODUCTION

Success in the paraprofessional's helping role depends on interaction between the Instructional Aide and the student, recognizing the impact each has on the other. A systematic and well planned in-service training program enables the Instructional Aide to effectively take the helping role.

Examples suggested in this manual's in-service training program are aimed at developing the relationship building skills of the Instructional Aide at the shop training station, in the resource room, and in the counseling situation.

PART A - 2

What kind of unique abilities would one expect to find in an Instructional Aide?

Vocational Skills

Diverse Background Experiences

Tolerance for Repetition

Humor

Insight

Optimism

Stamina

Personal or Informal Knowledge of Slow Learners

DESCRIPTION OF PROSPECTIVE PARA AND PROCESS FOR HIRING

How can such a staff member be hired?

An accurate job description will be the first step. Also, both written and oral interviews, carefully reviewed, will provide the prospective Instructional Aide's skill, motivational, and attitudinal profile.

VOCATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE

The major responsibilities of the paraprofessional in the Vocational Strategies for Special Needs Students Program follows. Although these responsibilities were developed for a particular program, they are clearly generalizable to other programs with similar objectives.

Assists the special needs students at the shop training station by repeating directions, interpreting the lesson plan to meet individual needs of the student, holding instruments, alerting the student to safety regulations, assisting in making calculations and other measurements.

Assists the vocational teacher by aiding and reinforcing acceptable learning behavior as well as health and safety regulations at the shop training station.

Assists the special needs student in the academic classroom (resource room) with shop related work (measurement, calculation, reading, vocabulary, spelling skills) under the guidance and supervision of the resource room teacher.

Provides some vocational and life counseling where needed and appropriate, monitoring student needs during such counseling and reporting student needs and student progress to the teacher counselor.

Assists the special needs student in the cafeteria, hallways, etc., and determines travel training needs, particularly to and from job site.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

1. What high school and/or college did you attend?

2. What diplomas/credits do you have?

3. Have you had other training experiences; i.e. on-the-job; apprentice; high school equivalency etc.?

4. Have you had work experience?
If so, please answer the questions below for your last three jobs:

	Employer	Address	Responsibilities	Reason for Leaving
1.				
2.				
3.				

5. Have you known (within your family or among your friends) a person with special needs, i.e. handicapped or slow learner?

6. Have you worked or attended school with special needs persons?

7. What experience/interest have you had in your life that you believe would be of value to you as an Instructional Aide in the Vocational Strategies Program?

8. Would you be willing to participate in an in-service training program?

9. In your opinion, which of the following is most likely to educate/instruct special needs students? You may check more than one.

a. Standard course of study.
b. Special course of study.
c. Standard group of students.
d. Small student groups.
e. Standard classroom.
f. Specially equipped classroom.
g. Instructional aides.
h. Standard shop training equipment.
i. Special shop training equipment.
j. Job/personal counseling.
k. Older teachers.
l. Younger teachers.
m. Male instructional aides.
n. Female instructional aides.

10. When you have a personal/job related problem, do you ask someone for advice?

11. Have you been asked by family/friends to give advice on their personal or job related problems?

12. Some of the following terms may describe you. Circle those terms that apply to you.

friendly	cautious	ambitious	athletic
out-going	strong	lazy	calm
shy	reader	confident	emotional
patient	eager	fearful	likely to succeed
humorous	learner	co-operative	moody
tolerant	mechanically inclined	trusting	likes people
generous	independent	suspicious	

13. Why do you think that you would be a good Instructional Aide for special needs students? (Please use the remainder of the page and the back of the page if necessary.)

BUT THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE INVOLVED.....

The paraprofessional is a member of a team. Defining other team members and determining the Instructional Aide's position among them is important to understanding the larger structure.

To this end, it may be helpful to look at the roles of other people in the Vocational Strategies Program.

Another program may employ another structure. Examining other members of a team is worthwhile because a program's larger structure may help the paraprofessional to define relationships and responsibilities.

VOCATIONAL (SHOP) INSTRUCTOR

When special needs students are mainstreamed into the shop training environment, the Vocational Instructor expands upon regular duties to arrange shop training stations with regard to special health and safety regulations.

The Vocational Instructor further expands upon regular duties in order to incorporate the Instructional Aide within the team structure by:

a. Arranging shop training stations in such a way as to most effectively employ the Instructional Aide.

b. Providing the Instructional Aide with materials and teaching strategies for work with the special needs student at the shop training station.

c. Consulting with the Instructional Aide to evaluate effectiveness of materials and teaching strategies.

When utilizing the Instructional Aide, the Resource Room teacher expands upon regular duties by:

a. Providing materials on vocational or shop "related" work to the Instructional Aide in the Resource Room such as illustrations and vocabulary of tools.

b. Providing the Instructional Aide with directions and assistance for the development of individual teaching strategies appropriate to the special needs students in the Resource Room.

c. Exercising overall responsibility for the Instructional Aides and evaluating their performance in the Resource Room.

d. Coordinating communication intra-staff, at the local school level, such as arranging for exchange of information between Vocational Instructor, the Instructional Aide and the Teacher Counselor.

TEACHER COUNSELOR

In order to provide overall counseling planning and direction, the Vocational Strategies Program developed the role of Teacher Counselor. By providing job and life counseling expertise, the Teacher Counselor is a necessary link between the special needs student and the world of work.

In addition to planning and coordinating overall job and life counseling as well as making job placements for special needs students, the Teacher Counselor expands upon regular duties by:

a. Providing strategies to Instructional Aides for monitoring of the special needs student such as observational techniques.

b. Providing resources to the Instructional Aide in individual counseling dilemmas such as formulas for problem solving.

c. Receiving and reviewing regular counseling reports from Instructional Aides on individual special needs students.

d. Devising, providing and coordinating methods of reporting to be used by Instructional Aides in order to maintain a flow of information on student monitoring. The Teacher Counselor recognizes the Instructional Aides' primary role to be that of vocational instructional assistant and, consequently, may create special forms for specific counseling information needed.

Name of Student _____

Name of Aide _____ Date _____

	Improved	No Change	Needs Attention	Comments
Attendance				
Health and Hygiene				
Self Confidence				
Interest in Class Work				
Dealings with Resource Room Teacher				
Interest in Shop Work				
Dealings with Shop Instructor				
Dealings with Aide				
Attitude Toward After School Job				
Dealings with Family				
Other?				

The Training Coordinator may have a variety of additional duties. For example, in the Vocational Strategies Program, the person responsible for coordinating the training of the Instructional Aides in the administrator who also is responsible for budget, student curricula, space, equipment, interfacing with appropriate superiors/peers, etc.

The Training Coordinator also may be responsible only for in-service training of Instructional Aides. However, just as the well planned and systematic in-service training of Instructional Aides is critical to their performance, the role of the Training Coordinator is critical to an in-service training program.

In the Vocational Strategies Program, the administrator expands upon regular duties to:

a. Screen and hire Instructional Aides. As described earlier this may be achieved by using written and personal interviewing techniques.

b. Arrange for a thorough orientation which will enable the Instructional Aide to understand the paraprofessional role and position in the larger structure. This may be accomplished in the first in-service training session when staff roles, structure and goals are examined.

c. Assess training needs, so that the Instructional Aide will be able to effectively meet the instructional requirements of special needs students, and arrange for such training.

d. Review evaluation and reports on Instructional Aides from other staff members.

e. Reinforce the Instructional Aide's position in the larger structure through group staff meetings, consultation with individual staff members, on-site visits, etc.

Paraprofessionals have been employed for many years in a variety of situations. As early as 1935, many New Deal programs, such as the Social Security Act, used paraprofessionals.

The schools of Bay City, Michigan have employed paraprofessionals since 1953 for the performance of nonprofessional duties which so often burden the teacher. Relieving the teacher of many clerical, secretarial and routine supervisory duties freed the teacher's time for more effective instruction. This is the most common use of the paraprofessional in the school - from Norwalk, Connecticut to University City, Missouri to Palo Alto, California.

Minneapolis, Minnesota employs aides in other capacities - instructional, school social work, and counseling or media. Each position has increasingly more responsible categories. For example, the entry level for Instructional Aides is the category of School Aide, for which there are no educational requirements. A newly hired School Aide performs only duties designated by teachers. With in-service training, work experience, or higher education credits, the School Aide can progress through a number of steps to the category of School Assistant. In this position s/he assists the teacher at every level and can assist substitute teachers in maintaining continuity when necessary. Similarly, a counseling aide can progress from assisting the counselor to actually doing small group counseling.

The duties of school aides in New York City range from clerical work to assisting in the preparation of instructional materials and the

planning of classroom activities. New York City also employs aides who make family visits and encourage parent participation in school life, as well as aides who serve as liaisons between family, public agencies and school.

In Baltimore, Maryland "community liaison workers" bridge the gap between home and school by providing family counselors, and "composition aides" serve as readers under the supervision of high school English teachers in Menlo Park, California and in University City, Missouri.

In San Mateo, California aides work with students in small groups or individually to assist them in missed or misunderstood assignments and to help them in weak spots.

The paraprofessional role was adapted for vocational training in the Boston Public Schools in 1974, through the Vocational Strategies for Special Needs Student project. It was found that assistants for the special needs student required differeniated staffing. (See introduction).

WHY A TRAINING PROGRAM?

The Instructional Aide is a necessary member of the support team for special needs students who are mainstreamed into a regular shop training environment. By providing individual vocational instruction as well as individual job and life counseling, the Instructional Aide takes the "helping" role that characterizes the paraprofessional.

However, paraprofessionals need specific information about the target population (special needs students) in order to work effectively with them. Therefore, the depth and duration of the in-service training for Instructional Aides (in great measure) will determine their success at shop training stations, in the resource room, and in the counseling situation.

If the Instructional Aide is a community resident with educational and background experience similar to those of the students, students in an urban school setting will respond positively. Providing strategies for employing such experiences in the paraprofessional role while sharpening written and verbal communication skills enable the Instructional Aide to constructively individualize vocational instructional support as well as job and life counseling.

In each of the seven units of workshops, five sessions are scheduled to be conducted by community experts in topic areas determined by the training coordinator as necessary to effective performance of Vocational Instructional Aides. The training coordinator may use the section headings in Part B as a guideline for credentials of expertise.

Five complementary sessions, initially conducted by the training coordinator, have the dual purpose of integrating the Instructional Aides into the total support team for special needs students and enhancing the topic sessions by involving Instructional Aides in verbal and written communication skills.

OVERVIEW

The in-service training program outlined in this manual is specifically designed to:

1. Provide the Instructional Aide with pertinent information about the target population (special needs students).

2. Assist the Instructional Aide to understand the interaction between him/herself and the student.

3. Assist the Instructional Aide to effectively use his/her own unique abilities at work.

4. Assist the Instructional Aide in understanding the unique experience of a special needs student at the shop training station so as to be alert for possible redirection of a student to an alternative shop learning situation.

5. Sharpen the Instructional Aide's verbal and written communication skills necessary for implementing vocational instructional techniques and strategies at the shop training station, in the resource room, and in the job and life counseling situation.

Since this is a program of in-service training, topics of the sessions are staggered so that information and skill building in all topic areas will be on-going throughout the year.

PART B - 3

1. Vocational Skills
   Group meeting to define roles and discussion of general shop environment.

2. Clinical Psychology
   Introduction to "relating".

3. Handicaps
   Profile of special needs student.

4. Study of Work
   Discussion of the business/industrial scene.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Hand out list of resources
   Assign case study.

1. Both Hours: Introduction to staff roles, structure of workshops, and goals of in-service training sessions.

2. First Hour: General Sharing (staff meeting)

   Second Hour: Use job application questionnaire to rewrite role of Instructional Aide based on Clinical Psychology session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report from point of view of special needs student entering program. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on study of work session.

5. First Hour: Write case study assigned in topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

PART B - 3

1. Vocational Skills
   Individual sessions

2. Clinical Psychology
   Introduction to counseling
   Your role in the "helping"
   relationship.

3. Handicaps
   Discussion of learning disabilities.

4. Study of Work
   Discussion of union realities.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Discussion of assigned case study and
   prepared case study.

UNIT II

1. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Drill on 1000 most misspelled words.

2. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Formats for reporting
   Styles, content, brevity, vocabulary, etc.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on learning disabilities problems. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write counseling interview with special needs student seeking work. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

5. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on using community resources. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

1. Vocational Skills
   Individual sessions.

2. Clinical Psychology
   Discussion on how to recognize and deal with problems of adolescent special needs students.

3. Handicaps
   Discussion of educable mental retardation and strategies for teaching.

4. Study of Work
   Discussion of job information: what is available, how to find out.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Discussion of oneself as a resource.

UNIT III

1. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Drill in fundamentals of grammar, punctuation, etc.

2. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report of a specific behavior episode. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on EMR session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

5. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on how life experience is a resource. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

PART B - 3

1. Vocational Skills
   Individual sessions

2. Clinical Psychology
   Further discussion on how to recognize and deal with problems of adolescent special needs students.

3. Handicaps
   Discussion of emotionally disturbed students.

4. Study of Work
   Discussion of work as a commitment and jobs as traps or tools.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Discussion of structured education and other educational options.

UNIT IV

1. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Review of fundamentals of writing - content, style, audience, etc.

2. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write case study assigned in topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on strategies for relating to the emotionally distrubed students.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write essay on reasons for working. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

5. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on how to use educational resources to prepare for work. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

PART B - 3

1. Vocational Skills
   Individual sessions

2. Clinical Psychology
   Theories and formulas for problem solving.

3. Handicaps
   Discussion of physical handicaps, especially deafness.

4. Study of Work
   Discussion of job counseling.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Discussion of governmental, legal and health services.

UNIT V

1. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Review of vocabulary and spelling.

2. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on comparing case study to theory. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on strategies for working with the deaf. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on motivating special needs student through job counseling. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

5. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write a report on using community resources to help a particular student. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

PART B - 3

1. Vocational Skills
   Individual sessions

2. Clinical Psychology
   Discussion of counseling and the Instructional Aide's role.

3. Handicaps
   Discussion of economic and cultural factors as a special need.

4. Study of Work
   Discussion of how to use site visits and field trips as a learning experience.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Discussion of culture and recreation as a learning experience.

1. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on new ways to use communication skills. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

2. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on a counseling dilemma. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on using education and jobs to mainstream in society. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on how site visits can accomplish educational goals. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

5. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

PART B - 3

1. Vocational Skills
   Group session on questions, answers and conclusions.

2. Clinical Psychology
   Discussion of counseling dilemmas and solutions.

3. Handicaps
   Discussion of Instructional Aide's "helping" role.

4. Study of Work
   Prepared questionnaire and discussion of conclusions.

5. Utilizing Resources
   Discussion of most useful resources (conclusions).

UNIT VII

1. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on the five individual vocational skills sessions. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

2. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on strategies for life counseling. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

3. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

4. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

5. First Hour: General Sharing

   Second Hour: Write report on topic session. Exchange papers, discuss, correct.

The purpose of this series of sessions is to study the Instructional Aide's role in facilitating education of the special needs student in a vocational shop setting. It also allows the Instructional Aide to study a specific trade skill as it will be experienced by a special needs student.

Since the Instructional Aide will be working under the guidance of a vocational teacher, individual sessions are planned with the vocational teacher for the Instructional Aide. These individual sessions will familiarize the Instructional Aide with materials and curricula appropriate to the special needs student. They will also allow the Aide to experience his/her role in the "helping" relationship.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS' SESSIONS

a. SPECIFIC VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Sessions

1. Group session (vocational teachers and teaching aides)
   Define roles and relationships; discuss general shop environment such as health and safety.

2. Individual Sessions.

3. Individual Sessions.

4. Individual Sessions.

5. Individual Sessions.

6. Individual Sessions.

7. Group Session (vocational teachers and teaching aides)
   Questions, answers, conclusions.

The purpose of this series of sessions is to prepare the Instructional Aide for building relationships with special needs students.

To begin this preparation, the Instructional Aide is encouraged to think about existing relationships among family, friends, acquaintances, and the different roles taken when participating in a variety of life situations.

After discussing and practicing the acts of relating and role taking that are employed in everyday life, the Instructional Aide is ready to plan for taking the "helping" role of the paraprofessional that relates teachers and special needs students.

The Instructional Aide's "helping" role also connects the special needs student with the world of work. For this reason, the ability to build trust, confidence and motivation that comes from the Instructional Aide's understanding of relating and role taking is essential to job and life counseling for the special needs students.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS' SESSIONS

b. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Sessions

1. Relating: Introduction. Examining individual roles and relationships as a resource in work.

2. Your New Role in the "Helping" Relationship: Introduction to counseling (resource list). Barriers to achieving ideal roles. Strategies for coping. Strategies for growth.

3. Part I: Recognizing and dealing with problems: Adolescent Special Needs Students. Behavior/ symptoms.

4. Part II: Recognizing and dealing with problems: Discussion and assignment of case study.

5. Theory and Formula: Discussion of assigned case study.

6. Evaluating Instructional Aide's relationship to special needs student: How it aids in counseling. Assign counseling dilemma.

7. Discussion of dilemma solutions: Utilize assigned dilemma. Conclusions.

Under Chapter 766 regulations (Massachusetts Statute) requiring a core evaluation and educational plan, the special needs students recommended to the Vocational Strategies Program have been judged ready to learn a specific skill trade and corresponding vocational academic information within a support team appropriately for that educational experience.

Utilizing the Instructional Aide in this educational support system requires that the Instructional Aide have background knowledge of special needs students.

The purpose of this series of sessions is to familiarize the Instructional Aide with general and specific information regarding special needs students and to explore his/her own relationship to special needs students within the educational experience.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS' SESSIONS

c. HANDICAPS: GENERALIZATIONS AND SPECIFICS

Sessions

1. Profile of special needs students: Prepared questionnaire to explore attitudes, information, and problems or needs. Group discussion (conducted by leader) or written response.

2. Learning Disabilities: Discussion of styles of learning appropriate to this disability.

3. Educable Mentally Retarded: Discussion of strategies for teaching to achieve as much learning as possible.

4. Emotionally Disturbed: Discussion on individual instruction and counseling as keys to performance.

5. Physically Handicapped: Discussion of barriers to learning experience for this group of students. Emphasis on deafness.

6. Economic and cultural factors as a special need: Discussion of barriers to achievement as experienced by non-English speaking and low income students.

7. Final prepared questionnaire and group discussion of the Instructional Aide's role in the helping relationship.

The purpose of this series of sessions is to familiarize the Instructional Aide, as supporting link between the special needs student and the world of work, with the realities of the world of work.

The special needs student needs special preparation for the obstacles and opportunities to be encountered upon completing his/her vocational training.

This special preparation will be achieved (in large measure) by the interaction of the special needs student experiences with the Instructional Aide and the job and life counseling provided by the Instructional Aide.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS' SESSIONS

d. STUDY OF WORK

Sessions

1. Business/Industrial Scene - job development: job opportunities; outreach programs for special needs students; attitudes.

2. Union realities-membership; contracts; negotiating; affirmative action for special needs students.

3. Job Information - availability of jobs; economics of work; new horizons.

4. Work as commitment and fulfillment - jobs as traps or tools in life.

5. Job counseling-social skills; decision making; strategies for upward mobility.

6. Field trips/site visits - strategies and techniques for incorporating the experience into the learning process.

7. Evaluative conclusions based on prepared questionnaire.

The purpose of this series of sessions is to recognize the numerous resources available for assistance, information, recreation and upward mobility of the special needs student.

Such a series cannot encompass all existing resources but may alert the Instructional Aide to the support system that exists already in the greater community.

Each session is designed directly to confront what often appears most difficult, i.e., finding paths in the community network.

The counseling relationship between the Instructional Aide and the special needs student makes it possible to provide this kind of resource where needed and also enables the special needs student to view himself/herself as a resource to be developed.

DESCRIPTION OF EXPERTS' SESSIONS

e. UTILIZING RESOURCES

Sessions

1. What's out there for you Part I: The help is there/resource listing handout. Discussion of resources. Assign case study.

2. What's out there for you Part II: Discussion of assigned case study. Distribution and discussion of prepared case study.

3. You, as a resource - Using your own life experience work; learning from life experience of others; relating to curiosity, winning the game.

4. Structured education - Introduction to Boston Public Schools: other educational options.

5. Government, legal, health services - Your rights and responsibilities as consumer.

6. Culture and fun as learning experience - Needs of the total person: reaching a balance in life.

7. Work session on most useful resources.

IN HOUSE SESSIONS: THE FIRST HOUR

Although Instructional Aides will be working with individual students "on their own" in the "helping" role, they will at the same time, be part of the greater team that includes vocational teachers, resource room teacher, teacher counselor, and training coordinator.

From the beginning, building this team is a primary goal of the training coordinator in anticipation of the Instructional Aide's increasingly responsible role. To this end, the first hour of these 35 "in house" sessions can be called "general sharing". The first hour provides specific time for the "staff meeting", that is, weekly summation of teaching and counseling experiences; problems encountered and possible solutions suggested by way of general discussion; curriculum/materials inventory, etc.

These one hour sessions also allow for the development of leadership skills in the Instructional Aide. It is suggested that at some point the training coordinator begin to turn over the leadership of these sessions to staff on a rotating basis, after assessing the team's strengths and skills. The actual number of sessions after which staff will rotate leadership is determined by the specific needs of the team and should remain flexible.

There is general agreement that we have become accustomed to taking in information from TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc. In other words, we have become passive receivers of information.

Because of this cultural development, individual writing and verbal communication skills are not called upon extensively enough and often enough to allow us to be competent in, or comfortable with, these forms of expression when we are required to exercise them in depth.

For this reason, the strengthening of written and verbal communication skills is emphasized in the second hour of the 35 in house workshop sessions in anticipation of the Instructional Aide's increasingly responsible role.

The Instructional Aide, in a "helping" role, will be interpreting lesson plans, writing reports, assisting individual students with their work both at the shop training station and in the resource room, and developing a relationship with students that will lead to job and life counseling.

IN HOUSE SESSIONS: THE SECOND HOUR

The second hour of the 35 in house workshops is planned to complement the 35 topic workshops. It provides practice in written and verbal communication skills in short work sessions. It permits the beginning preparation of work assigned during the previous workshop or the assignment of a related topic which expands upon the previous workshop.

The process of short (30 min.) written assignments to be followed by a short (30 min.) period of exchanging papers, general team criticism and correcting of papers, allows the team to learn together areas of strength, and individual areas where improvement is most needed.

In addition, the team process involves everyone as creator, critic and corrector. Under guidance from the training coordinator, the Instructional Aide is encouraged to examine his/her own work objectively, learn from his/her own mistakes, and begin the process of working together with the team while practicing verbal communication skills.

Because, in Massachusetts, there is currently no credentialing program for paraprofessionals as Instructional Aides, the purpose of this manual has been to present a chronological plan for the selection and training of paraprofessionals to serve in this capacity.

As it was considered necessary to select persons with aptitude, skills and motivation appropriate to working with special needs students in a vocational learning environment, careful screening methods for selection were developed and have been presented.

The topic areas of workshops conducted by community experts were developed specifically to enhance the paraprofessional's performance in a vocational and vocationally related environment.

The complementary workshop sessions conducted by the training coordinator were designed to develop team and specific skill building.

It is hoped that screening techniques for selecting Instructional Aides and specific training workshop content may stimulate interest in the paraprofessional as Instructional Aide.

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However, flexibility and innovation should guide the training coordinator when utilizing this manual for the training of paraprofessionals as Instructional Aides in any other learning environment than a vocational one such as the Vocational Strategies Program.

The Vocational Strategies Program required a unique approach for utilizing paraprofessionals as Instructional Aides, i.e., existence of a specific target population (special needs students) and the challenge of providing training for them within an ongoing vocational program.